

ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 24 DECEMBER 2023 - THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

READINGS: 2 SAMUEL 7:1-11,16; CANTICLE 15; ROMANS 16:25-27; CANTICLE 15; LUKE 1:26-38

WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT YOU ARE WITH US THIS MORNING! THIS BULLETIN WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH OUR WORSHIP. YOU CAN FIND THE NUMBERED HYMNS IN THE BLUE HYMNAL. AT COMMUNION TIME ALL ARE INVITED TO COME FORWARD AND SHARE IN THE EUCHARIST. THE BREAD IS TAKEN IN THE PALM OF THE RIGHT HAND; IF RECEIVING THE WINE, EITHER DIP (INTINCT) THE BREAD OR SIP FROM THE CUP. YOUR FOLDED HANDS WILL SIGNAL THE PRIEST THAT YOU WOULD PREFER A BLESSING.

THE WORD OF GOD

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Unison 3 Cantor All

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

3 Cantor All

Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

3 Cantor All

Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The people are seated.

A Reading from the Book of Samuel

In our Hebrew scriptures, the enemies of David have been subdued and David turns his thoughts to building a temple to the Lord. David's throne shall be established forever, the prophet Nathan declares.

When the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

In Canticle 15, Mary offers a song of praise to God who has looked with favor on her and who has lifted up the lowly and brought down the powerful. The Song of Mary is said together:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel, for he has remembered his promise of mercy, The promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans

In words that close his long letter to the community in Rome, Paul reminds the new Christians of the mystery now disclosed to all nations, bringing them to faith and obedience.

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, according to Luke. Glory to you, Lord Christ.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Christ.

O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease, and be yourself our King of Peace.
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Rejoice, etc.

Sermon -- The Rev. Michael L. Bradley, rector

Our Affirmation of Faith - What do we believe?

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

May God's peace be with you always. And also with you.

Holy Communion

Offertory Hymn 72, Hark! The Glad Sound The Savior Comes

The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth . . . who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,
2 Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

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The celebrant continues with the Prayer of Consecration, Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen.

Behold, the Lamb of God. Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world.

Happy are they who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

After all have received, please stand and pray together:

Faithful God; In this sacrament we receive the promise of salvation. May we, like the Virgin Mary, be obedient to your will. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Let us go forth to love and serve the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Hymn 657, Love Divine, All Loves Excelling Joy Of Heaven To Earth Come Down

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Our Mission: We share the light of Christ

by loving and serving our neighbors in the world.

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